

REMARKS

These amendment and remarks are being filed in response to the final rejection dated January 16, 2003. For the following reasons, this amendment should be entered, the application allowed, and the case passed to issue.

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1-14 and 18-26 have been withdrawn from consideration because of a restriction requirement.

Initially the Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of granting a personal interview with the undersigned on April 11, 2003. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that the amendment proposed herein would overcome the prior art rejections.

This amendment should be entered because no new matter or considerations are raised by this amendment, and this amendment clearly places the application in condition for allowance. The amendment to claim 15 is supported by the specification and the claims as originally filed.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fujii et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,426,548). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested. The following is a comparison between the invention as claimed and the cited prior art.

The Examiner asserts that Fujii teaches the claimed bearing structure having a hydrodynamic gas bearing, a spindle motor, and hard disk drive including: the fixed components (12, 16, 26), rotatable components (2, 36, 38), and the magnetic fluid (16) located in a region where there is no air flow generated by suction or discharge of a gas for generating hydrodynamic pressure at the hydrodynamic gas bearing, or in the region where the air flow is negligible.

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The bearing structure, per claim 15, comprises the following distinguishing features: a hydrodynamic gas bearing, fixed components and rotatable components which are kept in a non-contact state during rotation of the rotatable components by means of hydrodynamic gas pressure generated at both a radial bearing portion and a thrust bearing portion, and a magnetic fluid in the region where no gas flow is generated.

Fujii does not anticipate claim 15 because Fujii discloses that the thrust bearing portion is a sliding bearing, not a hydrodynamic bearing. Furthermore Fujii teaches liquid lubricant in the radial bearing portion of bearing structure. Claim 15 requires that hydrodynamic gas pressure is generated in both the axial and thrust directions. There is only gas in the radial and thrust bearing portions of the claimed bearing structure. Therefore, Fujii does not teach every limitation of claim 15 and does not anticipate claim 15.

Applicant's further submit that claim 15 is not suggested by Fujii.

Furthermore, as explained *supra*, the Examiner indicated that the proposed amendment would overcome the final rejection during the interview of April 11, 2003.

Dependent claims 16 and 17 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 15.

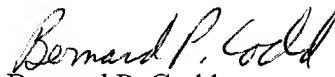
In light of the Amendments and Remarks above, this amendment should be entered, the application allowed, and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite the prosecution of the application.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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